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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MTD To Honor Outstanding Individuals For
Their Contributions To Transit
- MTD Board Meeting, January 6th, 6:30 pm -**

The Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) Board of Directors will honor three long-standing employees and two members of the community for their dedication and support of transit. The recognitions will take place Tuesday evening at 6:30 pm at MTD's public meeting room, 550 Olive Street.

Veteran driver Linda McMichaels retired after 23 years of dedicated service. Linda has been driving the Line 9 – Stow Canyon/UCSB Connection for several years. "Linda is an outstanding employee with an exemplary safety record and a wonderful personality", states Sherrie Fisher, Interim General Manager.

Also retiring after 17 years of service is driver Ernie Zaragosa. Ernie currently resides in Ojai but has his roots in Carpinteria where he has driven the Seaside Electric Shuttle for the past few years. Ernie has been an avid fan of electric vehicles and in the early 90's was one of the first drivers of the Downtown-Waterfront Electric Shuttle.

In addition to honoring these retirees, the MTD Board of Directors is enthusiastic about the return of the "Employee Spotlight" program, which honors employees for their outstanding performance. Tim Cardona, a mechanic with the MTD for over 23 years, has been selected for his exemplary performance during short-staffed times. Tim has an outstanding safety record and is an advocate of public transit riding the "Clean Air Express" bus from Lompoc almost every day.

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Lastly, a new "Transit Friendly" award honoring citizens of the South Coast for their contributions to public transportation will be introduced. The 2003 recipients are Ruth O'Donnell of Santa Barbara and Alfred Alvarez of Goleta.

Ruth, inspired after attending one of the "MTD Transportation 101" classes, was instrumental in educating the residents of Vista Del Monte on how to ride the bus, even coordinating bus outings.

Alfred has taken a special interest in assuring that passengers awaiting the bus adjacent to his home can do so in a comfortable and enjoyable environment. He has installed a bench and planted flowers and continues to maintain "his" bus stop.

Members of the public are encouraged to join the Board of Directors and MTD employees in honoring these outstanding individuals.

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